



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/837,988	04/19/2001	Hideki Masudaya	9281-3982	8875

757 7590 02/12/2004

BRINKS HOFER GILSON & LIONE
P.O. BOX 10395
CHICAGO, IL 60611

EXAMINER

ANYASO, UCHENDU O

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

2675

DATE MAILED: 02/12/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/837,988

Applicant(s)

MASUDAYA, HIDEKI

Examiner

Uchendu O Anyaso

Art Unit

2675

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 January 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-22 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-22 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

Art Unit: 2675

DETAILED ACTION

1. **Claim 1-20** are pending in this action.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC ' 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. **Claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-11, 13-15, 21 and 22** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Palalau* (U.S. 6,373,472) in view of *Brynielson* (U.S. 6,556,900).

Regarding **independent claims 1, 3, 9, 11, 21 and 22**, and for **claim 7**, *Palalau* teaches a driver control interface for a vehicle wherein a plurality of function that correspond to a plurality of electronic devices (column 1, lines 8-9, 52-60).

Furthermore, *Palalau* teaches a CPU 120 which controls the electronic devices (column 6, lines 64 through column 7, line 6, figure 12a at 120).

Furthermore, *Palalau* teaches a warning graphic 98 for generating a warning graphic for informing an operator of a mistaken action (column 5, lines 63 through column 6, line 3, figure 3 at 98).

Furthermore, *Palalau* teaches how the CPU 120 controls feature switches 28 and numerous vehicle components such as engine operating information and

Art Unit: 2675

electronic systems (column 6, line 61 through column 7, line 6, figure 12a at 120). Also, Palalau teaches how the warning graphic 98 would be displayed for a predetermined length of time or until the driver acknowledges having seen the warning by feature group switch (column 5, line 63 through column 6, line 3, figure 8 at 98).

However, Palalau does not teach a mistake or error counter for monitoring the operation on the feature switches to count and store the number of mistakes on each of the feature switches. On the other hand, Brynielson teaches a device and a system for diagnosing errors and maintenance of vehicle wherein signals are sampled and stored such that a change of the signal in relation to a previous signal value is measured, and compared to the value, and if the change is greater than the threshold value, increasing the value of the counter associated with this threshold value (see Abstract, figures 3, 4, 6, 8; column 1, lines 13-18).

Thus, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to combine Palalau and Brynielson because Palalau teaches a driver control interface for a vehicle wherein a plurality of function that correspond to a plurality of electronic devices (column 1, lines 8-9, 52-60) wherein a warning graphic 98 would be displayed for a predetermined length of time or until the driver acknowledges having seen the warning by feature group switch (column 5, line 63 through column 6, line 3, figure 8 at 98), Brynielson teaches a device and a system for diagnosing errors and maintenance of vehicle wherein signals are sampled and stored such that a change of the signal in relation to a previous

Art Unit: 2675

signal value is measured, and compared to the value, and if the change is greater than the threshold value, increasing the value of the counter associated with this threshold value (see Abstract, figures 3, 4, 6; column 1, lines 13-18). The motivation for combining these inventions would have been to provide a device and a system for diagnosing errors and maintenance of vehicle (column 1, lines 13-18).

Regarding **claims 2, 5 and 6**, in further discussion of claim 1, Palalau teaches how an electronic device selected by a function switch operated in a first action would be replaced with another device assigned to another function switch (column 6, lines 4-35, figure 9a at 28a-f, 100a-f).

Regarding **claims 10, 13, 14 and 15** in further discussion of claims 9 and 11, Palalau teaches how the CPU 120 controls feature switches 28 and numerous vehicle components such as engine operating information and electronic systems (column 6, line 61 through column 7, line 6, figure 12a at 120). Also, Palalau teaches how the warning graphic 98 would be displayed for a predetermined length of time or until the driver acknowledges having seen the warning by feature group switch (column 5, line 63 through column 6, line 3, figure 8 at 98).

Art Unit: 2675

Regarding **claims 17 and 19**, in further discussion of claims 1 and 9, Palalau teaches how the warning graphic 98 is an audio output device (column 5, lines 63-67, figure 8 at 50, 98).

4. **Claims 4, 8, 12 and 16** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Palalau* (U.S. 6,373,472) in view of *Brynielson* (U.S. 6,556,900), as in claims 1, 3, 9 and 11 above, and further in view of *Hermann* (U.S. 5,270,689).

Regarding **claims 4, 8 and 12**, in further discussion of claims 3 and 11, the combination of Palalau and Brynielson do not teach a second warning/notification signal. On the other hand, Hermann teaches a warning/notification aid by means of providing an acoustic voice output such as beeping noise to provide a vehicle user with an aid for the selection of the correct function group or individual function (column 2, lines 22-28).

Thus, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary to combine Palalau, Brynielson and Hermann inventions because while the combination of Palalau and Brynielson teach an error indicator and a warning graphic 98 for generating a warning graphic for informing an operator of a mistaken action (column 5, lines 63 through column 6, line 3, figure 3 at 98), Hermann teaches a warning/notification aid by means of providing an acoustic voice output such as beeping noise to provide a vehicle user with an aid for the selection of the correct function group or individual function (column 2, lines 22-28). The

Art Unit: 2675

motivation for combining these inventions would have been not only visual support to a user but also hearing support.

Regarding **claims 16**, in further discussion of claim 11, Palalau teaches how the CPU 120 controls feature switches 28 and numerous vehicle components such as engine operating information and electronic systems (column 6, line 61 through column 7, line 6, figure 12a at 120). Also, Palalau teaches how the warning graphic 98 would be displayed for a predetermined length of time or until the driver acknowledges having seen the warning by feature group switch (column 5, line 63 through column 6, line 3, figure 8 at 98).

Regarding **claims 18 and 20**, in further discussion of claims 4 and 12, Palalau teaches how the warning graphic 98 is an audio output device (column 5, lines 63-67, figure 8 at 50, 98).

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's amendments and arguments with respect to claims 1-20 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Contact Information

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Uchendu O. Anyaso whose telephone number is (703) 306-5934. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are

Art Unit: 2675

unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Steve Saras, can be reached at (703) 305-9720.

Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Washington, D.C. 20231

or faxed to:

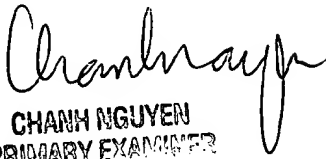
(703) 872-9314 (for Technology Center 2600 only)

Hand-delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park II, 2121 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA, Sixth Floor (Receptionist).

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Technology Center 2600 Customer Service Office whose telephone number is (703) 306-0377.

Uchendu O. Anyaso

2/9/2004


CHANH NGUYEN
PRIMARY EXAMINER